



WESTERN CONNECTICUT
HEALTH NETWORK

DANBURY HOSPITAL • NEW MILFORD HOSPITAL

TESTIMONY OF

*Danbury Hospital and New Milford Hospital
As the Western CT Health Network*

SUBMITTED TO THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
February 17, 2012

HB 5014, AN ACT MAKING ADJUSTMENTS TO STATE EXPENDITURES AND
REVENUES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2013

Western CT Health Network appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony concerning
HB 5014, AN ACT MAKING ADJUSTMENTS TO STATE EXPENDITURES AND
REVENUES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2013.

Western CT Health Network knows well the challenges of operating in this economic environment and make choices among competing priorities. We are grateful to Governor Malloy for submitting a budget that maintains hospitals' Medicaid rates. We also want to comment on concerns we have over several provisions in the proposed budget.

Western CT Health Network opposes several provisions in HB 5014 that would negatively impact hospitals and the communities we serve. **Specifically, we oppose those provisions that will:**

- ***reduce Medicaid Low-Income Adult enrollment by seeking a waiver to establish a \$25,000 asset limit (excluding an automobile or home); count family income when determining eligibility for individuals under the age of 26 and either living with their parents or claimed as a dependent for tax purposes; and impose limits on certain medical services***
- ***reduce reimbursement rates for certain dental benefits for individuals in the Medicaid program***
- ***revert rates for air ambulances to rates in place in FY 2011***

We concur with Senator Harp and Representative Walker, as well as the chairs of the Human Services and Public Health Committees, when, in a January 11, 2012 letter to Commissioner of the Department of Social Services Roderick L. Bremby, you cautioned that the Medicaid LIA population is one of our most vulnerable, and any modifications of the program would likely cause significant disruption and a loss of benefits.

These proposed changes will impede access to healthcare coverage for a vulnerable population that just recently became eligible for Medicaid coverage under federal reform.

Each of these reductions will have a negative impact upon Connecticut hospitals, and make it more difficult for people to find care in the appropriate setting and enroll and remain in Medicaid. In these difficult economic times, it is more important than ever that the state is steadfast in its commitment to help those who cannot help themselves.

As the regions' largest employer, we provide jobs for more than 4,000 employees across western Connecticut and, act as an economic catalyst for our community. Each of these reductions will also have a potential negative impact on our Network as an employer and economic driver in our communities.

Respectfully submitted on February 17, 2012

by

John M. Murphy, M.D.,

President and CEO

Western CT Health Network